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## **CATCH Court: An innovative method to combating human trafficking in women**

BY

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THESIS

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## Abstract

**Aims:** This study explored the intersections of mental health, substance abuse, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among women who have histories of human trafficking and the court staff that work with them.

**Methods:** This study is a cross-sectional exploratory design that includes a quantitative (Phase 1) and a qualitative component (Phase 2). Phase 1 of the study provides a descriptive lens of the women (n=61) participants in Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH) Court in 2016. Phase 2 includes semi-structured interviews with CATCH court staff (n=5) to explore their perspectives about mental health, substance abuse, ACEs and human trafficking and their impact on female participants in the program. For Phase 1, univariate analysis was performed and includes demographic information, as well as, the prevalence of mental health and substance abuse disorders, drug/alcohol and mental health services received, and ACEs of the women. For Phase 2, preliminary findings based on thematic analysis was conducted to understand the impact of these factors and human trafficking on female participants in the CATCH Court program.

**Results:** Phase 1 results suggest high levels of opioid use and PTSD diagnoses for women. Preliminary findings of Phase 2 data include 4 primary themes: social bonds (including the exploiter), dual/comorbid/co-occurring mental health disorders, barriers, and success during and after the program as reported by the court staff.

**Conclusions:** These findings highlight high levels of mental health and substance abuse disorders, i.e., opioid abuse among women. Also, given the indescribable impact the exploiter has on the victim, court diversion programs need to focus on developing comprehensive social support during and after their program completion.

**Key words:** Human trafficking, Human Smuggling, ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), CATCH Court, Problem-solving Courts

## **CHAPTER I: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **Introduction**

Human trafficking is a growing global issue. In 2016, The Labor Organization estimated there are 40.3 million victims of human trafficking globally (McLaughlin, 2019). That would mean nearly 11,000 people are trafficked each day all around the world. Human trafficking has several different meanings; therefore, some victims of human trafficking do not realize they were a victim of it. The most common and comprehensive definition of human trafficking was adopted by the UN Office of Drugs and Crime in 2000 as, “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons” (McLaughlin, 2019). The terms human trafficking and human smuggling are often mistaken for one another, they are in fact not the same. Human smuggling is the illegal transportation of persons from one place to another. Human trafficking is similar but is more focused on exploitation rather than transportation. Victims of human trafficking can be “forced or threatened into coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, they can be forced into labor or services, slavery, removal of organs, and sexual exploitation” (Logan, Walker, & Hunt, 2009).

### **Background**

Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking anywhere, but this is not necessarily true even though societal messages suggest it is the case. Studies have found social and racial factors that can increase a person's chances of being a victim of human trafficking (McLaughlin, 2019). Vulnerability is a big factor for traffickers when deciding who they are going to traffic. Children and women are vulnerable populations. Nearly 28% of all human trafficking victims are children, while women are 51% of victims, and men average around 13-21% of human trafficking victims (The Facts, 2018). Traffickers search for people based on their

vulnerabilities, i.e., individuals who may have histories of and also exhibit symptoms associated with trauma, abuse, neglect, disability, violence, family separation, homelessness, poverty, or even a combination of several factors (McLaughlin, 2019). One study indicated that each year between 100,000 and 300,000 children in the United States are at high risk of commercial sexual exploitation (The Facts, 2018). The National Runaway Switchboard suggests that there are between 1.3 million and 2.8 million runaway and/or homeless youth living on the streets every year, making many children extremely vulnerable to instances of trafficking (The Facts, 2018). The link between race and those who are trafficked have also been recognized. In 2018, the top reported racial and ethnic minority groups of human trafficking were Latino, Asian, African American, White, and Multi-racial. There were 2,348 Latinos, 1,809 Asians, 1,072 African Americans, 989 White, and 184 multiracial cases were reported who were trafficked in 2018, which does not include undocumented reports. Overall, people of color have a greater chance of being exploited (The Polaris Project, 2020). Studies report that people of color are more likely to go through any of the following: abuse, neglect, poverty, homelessness, trauma, disability, family separation, and violence, which make them much more susceptible to the advances of exploiters (NCVRW Resource Guide, 2013).

The number of reported trafficking instances are at an all-time high, and it occurs in every country around the world. From a global perspective, 50% of trafficking victims reportedly come from East Asia, while 35% are said to originate from the Western hemisphere. The remaining 15% come from Africa, Europe, Latin American, and South Asia. The top five countries noted for human trafficking activities are India, China, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. According to the United States Department of State, globally, there are from 600,000 to 800,000 people being trafficked across the borders (McLaughlin, 2019). It is estimated that between

14,500 to 18,500 foreign nationals are being trafficked into the United States annually (George, 2012). The United States is one of the top ten destination countries, and Ohio ranks fourth in the country for human trafficking cases (Human Trafficking Statistics by State 2020, 2020). The Polaris Project, a non-profit organization that researches human trafficking in the United States reported 375 calls to the human trafficking national hotline last year (The Polaris Project, 2020). In 2018, there were 1,352 calls and Ohio made up one-third of the calls the hotline received. The areas in and around Ohio and southern Michigan are known to be hot spots in the United States, along with the states on the east coast (Johnson, 2017). Unfortunately, human trafficking is chronically underreported, so it is difficult to know exactly where illegal transactions are made.

### ***Gaps in Research***

There has been a significant focus on an international level with regards to human trafficking and the majority of those individuals who have been described or studied have been populations of color. Similarly, in the United States, there has been a focus on women of color even though much of the legislation has been driven by what has been deemed as White Slavery, the “procurement—by use of force, deceit, or drugs—of a white woman or girl against her will for prostitution” (Collet and Gozdzia, 2005). The purpose of this study is to understand a local population of female victims of human trafficking in Central Ohio who are understudied. A previous study included an evaluation of the Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH) Court program. Few, if any studies have included court staff perspectives about mental health factors that impact the CATCH Court participants. This project will fill this gap.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to explore the well-being of female human trafficking victims in the CATCH Court diversion program in Central Ohio. Also, the study purpose

included a focus on women's mental health, substance use and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) given their involvement with human trafficking, as well as, understand the perspectives of CATCH Court staff views about the impact these factors and human trafficking have on female participants in the CATCH Court.

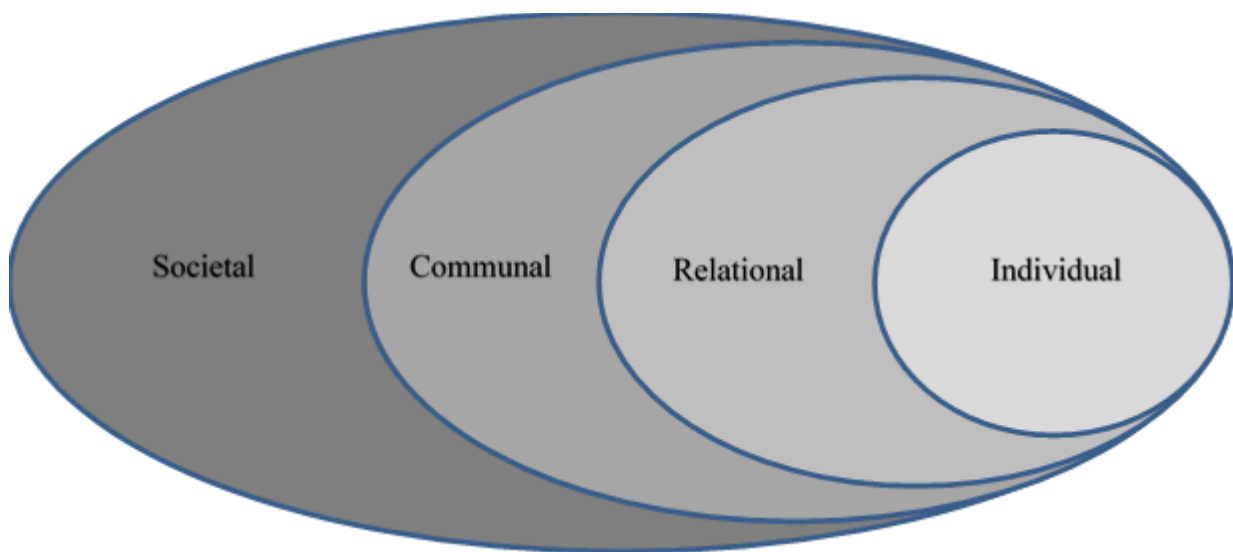
### **Significance of the Study**

This study seeks to fill an important gap in the present literature by exploring the prevalence of mental health correlates of female victims of human trafficking, as well as the perspectives of CATCH Court staff to understand the different ways that women are impacted by human trafficking, as well as the impact of the CATCH Court. The study is meant to explore the intersections of mental health, substance abuse, and ACEs among women who have histories of human trafficking.

This thesis research study builds on the existing literature in several ways. First, this study identifies the prevalence of mental health factors of female victims of human trafficking within the context of all four social domains in the socio-ecological framework. Second, this study explores the views of local court staff who work with women participants of CATCH Court to understand the impact of these mental health factors and their impact on the women in CATCH Court. The COVID-19 pandemic required a change in the initial plan to interview staff at the Franklin County Court, so an amendment was submitted to and approved by the institution's regulatory board allowing the collection of interview data via the zoom platform. Yet, this study builds on the scant literature base that focuses on female human trafficking victims, as well as the perspective of providers that work with them.

### **Conceptual and Theoretical Framework**

The socio-ecological framework (See Figure 1) was used to enhance our understanding of how human trafficking victims are impacted across all domains. The framework includes four domains and is based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory (Quinn, Hope, & Cryer-Coupet, 2019). The four domains are individual, relational, communal, and societal. This framework, as well as the importance of the social domains have been emphasized by scholars at the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to outline adverse health outcome prevention work (Quinn, Hope, & Cryer-Coupet, 2019; Volpe et al., 2017). This current study focuses on intersections of mental health, substance abuse, and ACEs among women who have histories of human trafficking. The socio-ecological framework creates a sense of how all domains affect human trafficking victims, including the intersections of mental health, substance abuse, and ACEs. The ecological theory aims to address how individuals are all part of interconnected structures that can affect them from all different levels of societal, communal, relational and most importantly affect their individualism. Although this theory was not tested, it informed the study design, research questions and the study findings.



**Figure 1. Socio-ecological Framework**



## **Study Aims/Research Questions**

The aim of this cross-sectional exploratory study is to explore the intersections of mental health, substance abuse, and ACEs among women who have histories of human trafficking. One sub-aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding women's involvement in human trafficking, including the role of the exploiter (trafficker). Further, how might the exploiter/victim relationship play a role in the women's decision to escape or return to the exploiter? This study is not a traditional mixed methods study, however; it includes a quantitative and a qualitative component. Thus, the study comprises two phases: Phase 1 – Quantitative and Phase 2 - Qualitative. Phase 1 of the study provides a descriptive lens of the women involved in CATCH Court in 2016. Phase 2 includes semi-structured interviews with CATCH court staff (n=5) to explore their perspectives about the mental health, substance abuse and ACEs of female victims of human trafficking in the program. The research questions for the study include:

### **Phase 1: Quantitative**

- Research Question: How do mental health, substance abuse and ACEs differ among women CATCH Court participants in 2016?

### **Phase 2: Qualitative**

- Research Question: What perspectives do CATCH Court staff have regarding human trafficking and its impact on female participants who have histories of mental health, substance abuse and ACEs?

## **Definitions of Terms**

*Human Trafficking:* The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons.

*Human Smuggling:* The illegal transportation of persons from one place to another.

*White Slavery:* Procurement—by use of force, deceit, or drugs—of a white woman or girl against her will for prostitution.

*The Polaris Project:* A non-profit organization that researches human trafficking in the United States.

*Problem-solving Courts:* Specialized dockets within the criminal justice system.

*CATCH Court:* Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH) Court blends punitive sentences with a 2-year treatment-oriented non-adversarial program for participants with multiple services for physical and psychological problems.

### **Abbreviation of Terms**

*ACEs:* Adverse Childhood Experiences

*CATCH:* Changing Actions to Change Habits

*WHO:* World Health Organization?

*CDC:* Centers of Disease Control and Prevention

*IOM:* International Organization for Migration

## **CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

This review is not an exhaustive examination of literature regarding mental health factors of female victims of human trafficking. By design, it reviews only the most relevant material to support this thesis research study. Key concepts are included to explain the variables identified in the study. It begins with an overview of the human trafficking, contributing factors, adult women and human trafficking and the CATCH Court program in Central Ohio.

### **Literature Review**

Human trafficking is a “horrific crime against humanity” that brings about both physical and emotional harm and trauma to its victims (Heffernan & Blythe, 2014). It has been around for centuries and it has been traced back to the African slave trade because it was the first documentation of human trafficking. The African slave trade was the first known international flow of humans (Oster, 2015). During this time there were no laws banning human trafficking. It was legal and the government tolerated it because Africans/African Americans were dehumanized. In 1807, the British made their first law against slavery. Then 13 years later, the United States made their first effort to ban slavery (Collet & Gozdzia, 2005). It was not abolished until 1865 with the 13th amendment. After the termination of the African slave trade, White slavery emerged as a new practice. White slavery specifically focuses on the procurement of a white woman or girl against her will for prostitution by force. As the problem of slavery grew and received more attention, governments began to realize the magnitude of this issue and proceeded to modify laws to prevent it from occurring any longer. In 1899 and again in 1902, international conferences against White slavery were constructed in Paris (Collet and Gozdzia, 2005). In 1904, the International Agreement for the Suppression of “White Slave Traffic” was signed making it the first international agreement for human trafficking. The purpose of this agreement was to ensure that victims were returned to their own country. The criminalization of White slavery did not occur until the signing of the International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Trade in 1910.

Although the First World War drew attention away from White slavery, the war resulted in the building of the League of Nations. The League of Nations is the first international organization of nations and denotes the first-time agreements could be made within an established organization. This gave the public more pressure to cooperate (Collet & Gozdzia, 2005).

2005). Throughout the World War I era, international trafficking of White women was recognized, but also children, and males. In 1921, 33 representatives from countries attended the League of Nations international conference where the International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children was signed. During this time, human trafficking only covered the sexual exploitation and position pieces of trafficking. After the Second World War, the member-nations of the United Nations adopted the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others in 1949 (Oster, 2015). It is the first legally binding international agreement on human trafficking. However, only 66 nations had ratified it so far.

Over the course of 51 years, other forms of human trafficking have been recognized and have grown in scope. The most recognized and performed types of human trafficking include sex trafficking and labor trafficking (Banks & Kyckelhahn, 2011). In 2000, the United Nations created the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children (Oster, 2015). It was the first agreement that acknowledged modern-day slavery, as well as the fact that men are at risk of being victims of human trafficking as well.

Although there are identified hot spots in the world where human trafficking is prevalent, it does not limit other locations or regions where it can occur. A single study was done in the Netherlands on human trafficking and a crime of relational nature between victims of human trafficking and their exploiter. The study was conducted between 2006 and 2010 and explored the relationship between victims and their traffickers, as well as the presence of domestic violence. The research was based on an analysis of 12 different police investigations. The results suggest there are intimate relations between traffickers and their victims and that these

relationships are like domestic violence relationships. Similar traits were noted – intimidation, violence, control, as well as affection (Verhoeven, Grestel, Jong, et al., 2013). This empirical study shows the importance of focusing on the relational aspect of human trafficking so that authorities are better able to understand this issue in communities and recognize questions they need to ask.

Human trafficking is an even bigger problem than it used to be. Currently, there are at least 510 known trafficking rings all over the world (Oster, 2015). Laws have certainly been made, but still, are not followed. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 states that anyone who participates in sexual acts from human trafficking victims will be subjected to arrest, prosecution, and convicted as a sex trafficking offender. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 also established the Domestic Trafficking Victims' Fund. This fund allows money from the arrested traffickers to assist victims and survivors of human trafficking. Punishments are enhanced when a minor (anyone under the age of 18) is involved in the trafficking. Not only has modern-day slavery changing in terms of the law, but the landscape is changing as well. It is even easier today for people to be lured into trafficking rings due to technology. Online platforms such as social networking and online classified sites are potential venues for exploitation (Oster, 2015).

### ***Contributing Factors***

There are multiple contributing factors as to why human trafficking is happening. The first and main reason is because of the profit that can be made. Human trafficking is a market-driven criminal industry, which it is based on the principles of supply and demand, just like drugs or weapons (Bales, 2011). A global crime, human trafficking reportedly produces a profit of \$150 billion annually, according to statistics from the Organization for Economic Co-

operation and Development. It can happen anywhere because on any level there is money that can be made (Bales, 2011). Another reason is because of war and political conditions. When things get bad and populations start to scatter it leaves more people vulnerable who are also likely to be treated unfairly and poorly. The unsatisfied lust of a person is another reason human trafficking still exists – without the buyer, human trafficking would not exist. Lastly, for some, human trafficking seems to be a way to a better life (Bales, 2011). Traffickers (exploiters) promise jobs, money, happiness, and stability to lure and entrap their victims. If these people are vulnerable, with few other opportunities for employment, etc., they will do anything they can to earn money to meet their needs.

### ***Adult Women and Human Trafficking***

Although women, men, and children can all be trafficked for numerous purpose, trafficking tends to be a “gendered” crime. Historic and current evidence strongly suggests that those who are trafficked into the sex industry and as domestic servants are more likely to be women. Nearly 28% of all human trafficking victims are children, while women are 51% of victims, and men average between 13-21% of human trafficking victims (The Facts, 2018). There is a higher percentage of women between ages 18-26, but also high numbers of women between the ages 29-38. The average age ending up being age 26 (International Organization for Migration, 2020). Women are excessively targeted due to being disproportionately affected by poverty and other structural factors that impede their access to education, employment opportunities, and other resources (ChartsBin, 2016). The average duration of trafficking for female victims identified by International Organization for Migration (IOM) is 1.8-2 years (International Organization for Migration, 2020). After women escaped or leave captivity, they

often face criminal offenses for their participation in trafficking activities due to being controlled by their exploiter.

### ***CATCH Court***

Problem-solving courts are specialized dockets within the criminal justice system. The purpose of these courts is to uncover underlying issues that may contribute to one's criminal offense. Problem-solving courts have a different approach to addressing social, institutional, and physical issues rather than traditional criminal system that tend not to focus too much on those aspects. These courts originated in 1989 (Dorf & Fagan, 2003) and the first ones were focused on drugs. Instead of offenders being incarcerated they were sent to treatment for their substance abuse issues. Since then, several courts have been added to the system, including young adult probation court, homelessness court, domestic violence courts, mental health courts, community courts, etc. These are all problem-solving courts that aim to address underlying criminogenic risks, that may have led to criminal behavior (Dorf & Fagan, 2003). Although is it very limited, efforts are being made to implement human trafficking courts.

In Columbus, Ohio, there is a diversion program for victims of human trafficking. Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH) Court was founded in 2009 and blends punitive sentences with a 2-year treatment-oriented non-adversarial program for participants with multiple services for physical and psychological problems (Miner-Romanoff, 2017). The CATCH Court program is a specialty docket program that provides closely supervised, all-inclusive assessments, and treatment services, in which defendants are held accountable for their criminal behavior and for adherence to the program requirements (Miner-Romanoff, 2017). Individuals are only eligible to participate in the CATCH Court program if they are referred by their attorney and if the judge approves the referral. Participants can get their records expunged if

they follow the program. The survivors work alongside all CATCH Court staff while enrolled in the program. CATCH Court provides the survivors with opportunities for recovery given the high rates of trauma the women have experienced, which range from abuse, victimization, intimate partner violence, as well as mental health or substance use disorders whether diagnosed or undiagnosed. They can receive a multitude of social services and therapeutic treatment, while also receiving housing. Unlike traditional processes within the court, the judge and court staff empathetically and collectively address the client's needs. The roles of these professionals are empathic and supportive, with recognition of the societal ills that have contributed to the offenses (Miner-Romanoff, 2017).

### **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

The research methods were developed with ethical considerations in mind. The study was conceptualized with the idea of accessing information about female victims of human trafficking versus speaking to them directly. Instead, deidentified assessment information about participants in the CATCH Court program was collected. Also, to explore the impact of mental health factors and human trafficking on the participants, semi-structured interviews were conducted with CATCH Court staff to explore their views. The study protocol was approved by The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board, however; the protocol was changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, an amendment was submitted and approved to conduct the semi-structured interviews with court staff via the zoom platform. Almost all of the ethical considerations that came into play within the research were those concerning researcher bias as the results are analyzed and presented, and the prevention of any bias influencing interpretation of the descriptive results of the assessment data or the qualitative responses.

#### **Research Design**



The research design was descriptive, exploratory and comprised a cross-sectional design using secondary administrative (assessment) data about female participants (n=61) in CATCH Court in 2016. First, the secondary deidentified data about the CATCH Court participants was reviewed and collected from the CATCH Court Director, Hannah Eastabrook's office computer at the Franklin County Court. The data is not publicly available. There was no contact with current or past CATCH Court participants. Second, semi-structured interviews with CATCH Court staff (n=5) were conducted with zoom technology to get their perspectives about the impact human trafficking has on the CATCH court participants.

A cross-sectional design gathers information on characters that appear within a specific group at one point in time. This design is most fitting because it is used when a study involves looking at people who differ on one key characteristic at one specific point in time (Levin, 2006). This study consists of two phases and is not a traditional mixed methods study.

### **Population and Sample Design**

The sample includes female participants of CATCH Court (n=61) in 2016 for Phase 1 (quantitative) of the study. The sample for Phase 2 (qualitative) of the study included CATCH Court staff (n=5) who completed one semi-structured interview using the zoom platform. The Director of the CATCH Court identified a list of staff who might be willing to participate in the study. They were not required to participate in the study nor were they required to respond to the request to participate.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The student and faculty advisor met with the CATCH Court Director, Hannah Eastabrook and collected the CATCH Court participant data. Phase 1 included data collection of secondary administrative data the student Co-Investigator was able to access about the CATCH Court

participants in 2016. Per the Director, signed confidentiality forms were completed per CATCH court procedure to review and document the deidentified aggregate information about the CATCH Court participants. Ms. Eastabrook was the contact for the study; she was not engaged in the research. She provided access to the court location, staff and data only. The assessment data was collected and downloaded on an encrypted USB and then saved on a laptop computer into an SPSS file and saved onto a password protected encrypted external hard drive in one setting. The data was transported (usb, external hard drive and laptop computer) from the court to the faculty advisor's office and stored in a locked file cabinet. Data was stored in the faculty advisors' locked office and on secure, password protected, and computers.

In Phase 2 of the study, participants were recruited through the CATCH Court Director. Participants qualified for the study if they worked with human trafficking survivors at CATCH Court. Potential respondents were sent an email invitation to participate in the research study, including the recruitment flyer, study form, and the informed consent form to be reviewed prior to the interview. Within 24 hours, everyone was contacted via telephone to confirm their participation in the study. Hard copy files including the introductory and consent forms (e-mailed to the individual 24 hours prior to the zoom interview), face sheet, and copy of the semi-structured interview guide were compiled for each participant.

The student Co-Investigator showed and read the informed consent via zoom and secured information to complete one face sheet and one semi-structured interview, as well as use an interview guide to conduct one semi-structured interview to get their perspective on the impact of human trafficking on the CATCH Court participants. Each interview spanned for no more than 50 minutes to an hour. Study protocols were approved by the IRB at The Ohio State University.

Following the approval to conduct the study from The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the state of Ohio being placed on a state of emergency. Consequently, the semi-structured interviews for Phase 2 of the study could not be conducted at the court. The Faculty Advisor discussed the idea of virtual interviews with the CATCH Court Director and she agreed, so an amendment was submitted to the IRB requesting that the interviews be conducted via the zoom platform. The amendment was approved, and the student recruited the study participants per the approved protocol previously explained with the one change indicating that the interviews would be conducted via zoom.

The interviews with the CATCH Court staff (n=5) via the zoom platform (via a laptop or desktop computer) resulted in both video recorded and transcribed content for each interview. Zoom is a virtual platform that The Ohio State University uses to host meetings like this interview. The court staff were informed that their participation was voluntary so they could withdraw at any time. Using the zoom virtual platform, an interview guide was utilized including an informed consent script that the Co-Investigator followed. Also the study introductory and consent forms were shown (on zoom) and read aloud with the court staff and once they stated they wanted to participate, their verbal agreement to participate in the study was recorded and noted as their informed consent to participate in this study. The time required from each participant for the study was 60 minutes and involved completing one face sheet (the participant was asked the questions on the face sheet and their responses were documented and they were also informed of this) asking basic demographic information (age, race, education). They were also be asked to participate in the audio-recorded semi-structured interview.

All the semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed via zoom. The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis methods to identify themes about court staff

perspectives and experiences working with female CATCH Court participants and the impact of human trafficking. Data storage devices (memory sticks or disks) with audio-recorded and transcribed data will be locked in the file cabinets of the research personnel. No identifiers were included in the transcribed data and all video recordings will be destroyed after transcription analyses is complete. All names of people and places were be replaced with pseudonyms.

No protected health information will be collected from the CATCH Court staff, which could be used to connect them to their contribution to this research project so they did not suffer from data re-identification. The findings from this study will be shared with the CATCH Court staff for respondent verification. Research reports and information will only utilize de-identified data that will be published about the participants.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

This study involves a quantitative (Phase 1) collection and analysis of deidentified aggregate data from the CATCH Court assessment for female participants in 2016, i. e., demographic data (age, race/ethnicity), historical data about their mental health, substance use and ACEs. The secondary data analysis included univariate analysis, i. e., frequency counts from the sample to determine what similarities and differences. The student Co-Investigator accessed secondary administrative data for CATCH Court participants for the year 2016. The records also included types of abuse, drugs abused, alcohol/drug services reported, primary and secondary mental health diagnosis, and mental health services reported.

Phase 2 included qualitative data collection; upon consenting to participate in the study, 5 semi-structured interviews were conducted via zoom. They each completed a face sheet and participated in one semi-structured interview using an interview guide to elicit their perspectives

on the impact of human trafficking on the CATCH Court participants. Each interview was no more than 50 minutes to an hour.

### **Chapter Summary**

The research design, methods, and instruments assisted in determining the impact human trafficking has on women of CATCH Court's well-being based on their mental health, as well as their histories of substance abuse, and ACEs. A two-phased study provided more information about this population and how they are impacted throughout all domains: individual, relational, communal, and societal of the socio-ecological framework.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

This study explored the well-being of female victims of human trafficking who were participants in CATCH Court in Central Ohio. Of specific interest, the study included assessment data about female victims of human trafficking (Phase 1), as well as explored the CATCH Court staff's perspectives about the impact of mental health factors and human trafficking on the participants (Phase 2). This chapter describes the key results of the study, outlined below.

### **Phase 1**

A series of univariate analyses were completed to gain an understanding of the characteristics of the sample. The total sample for the study included 61 women participants in CATCH Court in 2016 in Central Ohio. The demographic profile of the sample included middle aged, White women. All the women were between the ages 20-48 and all identified as females (Figure 2). Nearly 80% of the women were White, 7% were African American, 3% were bi-racial, and 11% of the participants' race was not collected (Figure 2). Demographic and mental health data was analyzed, including reported types of abuse, drugs abused, alcohol/drug services reported, primary and secondary mental health diagnosis, and mental health services reported.

To address the research question, data was analyzed to determine the types of abuse that were categorized as physical abuse, physical neglect, domestic violence, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and community abuse (n=30). Only half of the sample was collected due to time. The highest reported types of abuse were sexual abuse (63%) and domestic violence (60%) (Figure 3). Half (50%) of participants (n=30) reported physical abuse and community abuse, while the lowest rates of abuse were in emotional abuse (33%) and physical neglect (20%) (Figure 3).

Figure 4 shows drugs prevalence and opioids (58%) were the most common drug of choice. Cocaine was the second highest with 43% of the CATCH participants reporting this (n=61). Lastly, 83% of 30 women received alcohol/drug abuse services prior to their participation in the CATCH Court program. Also, 10% did not receive any treatment, while 7% were not aware of services or treatments they were able to receive or where to receive them (Figure 5).

Lastly, Figure 5 displays what mental diagnoses were prevalent. Participants were assessed to determine both primary and secondary diagnoses. The most prominent diagnoses were anxiety disorder, major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), bi-polar disorder, cocaine use disorder, opioid use disorder, cannabis use disorder, and schizophrenic disorder. PTSD was the most common mental health disorder. Again, opioid use disorder was the second most common diagnoses (Figure 6). In terms of women receiving mental health services prior to their participation in CATCH Court, 54% of women (n=30) endorsed this. Thirty-three percent had not received any prior mental health services, and 13% were not aware of services or treatments they were able to receive or where to receive them (Figure 7).

Gender Identity	Race	Age
female	white	37
female	white	31
female	white	31

female	white	24
female	white	29
female	white	32
female	African American	25
female	white	33
female	white	25
female	white	22
female	white	60
female	white	33
female	white	41
female	white	34
female	white	38
female	white	45
female	white	35
female	not collected	34
female	white	29
female	African American	27
female	white	31
female	white	20
female	white	23
female	white	21
female	white	28
female	white	24
female	white	27
female	white	34
female	white	39
female	white	27
female	Bi-racial	28
female	white	28
female	African American	22
female	white	22
female	white	33
female	white	32
female	white	29
female	white	35
female	not collected	28
female	white	27
female	white	48
female	white	22

female	white	43
female	not collected	not collected
female	white	30
female	white	47
female	African American	34
female	white	35
female	white	25
female	not collected	31
female	white	24
female	white	34
female	Bi-racial	33
female	white	42
female	white	24
female	white	26
female	white	25
female	white	48
female	not collected	31
female	white	23
female	not collected	22

Figure 2

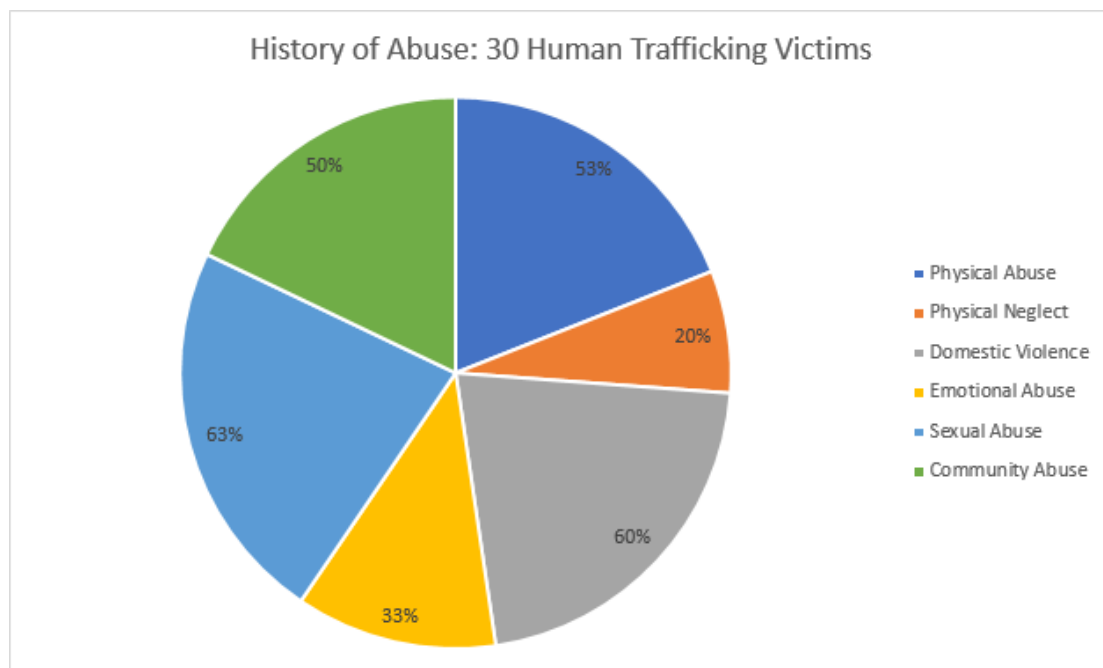


Figure 3



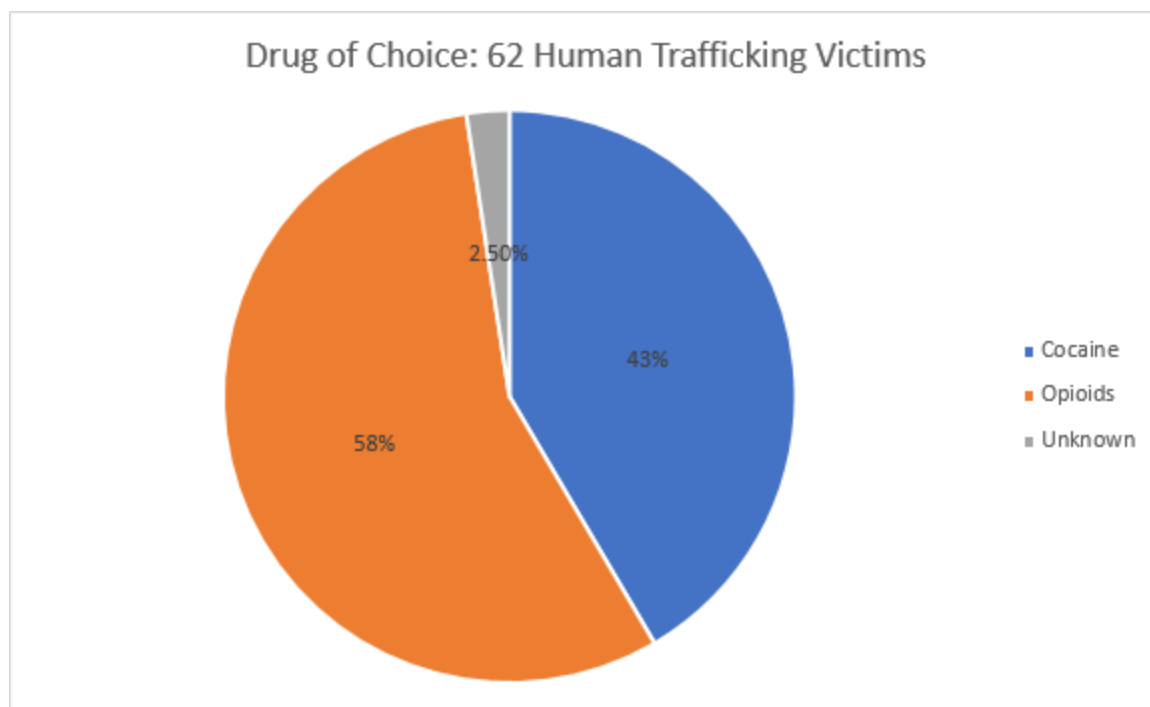


Figure 4

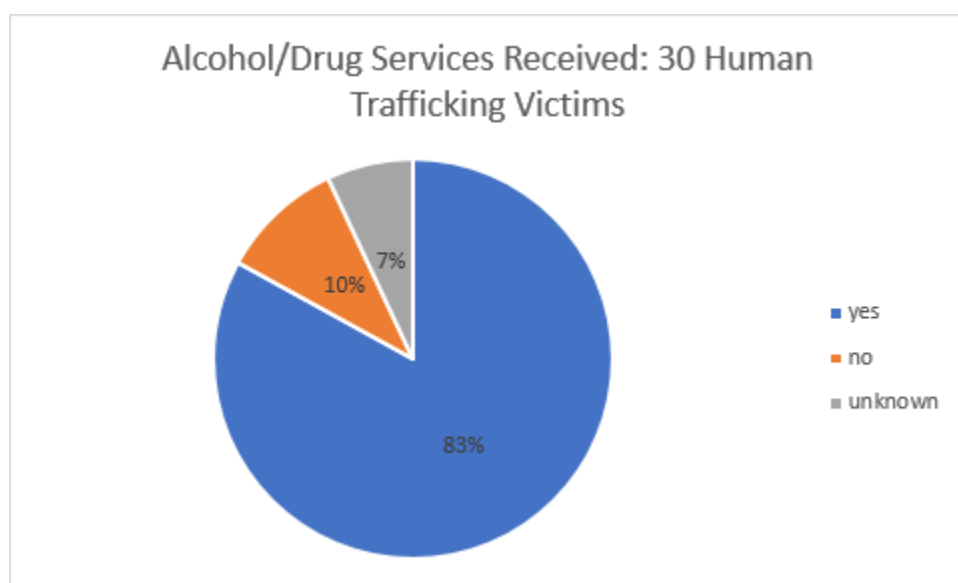


Figure 5

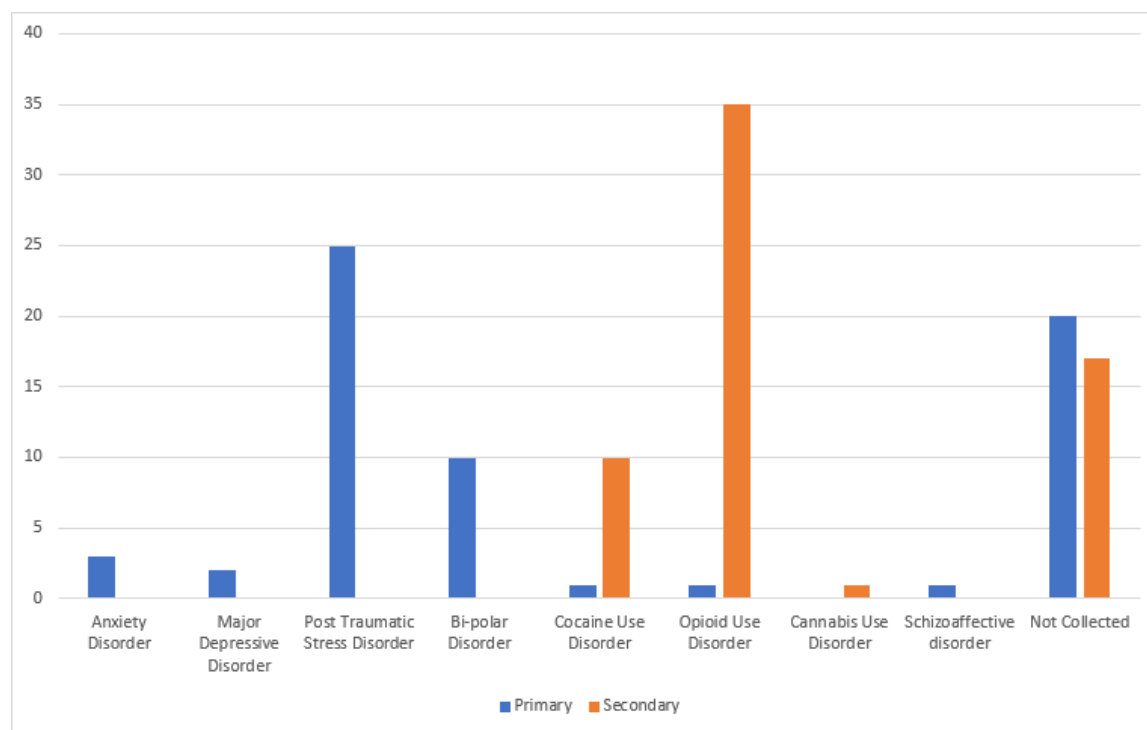


Figure 6

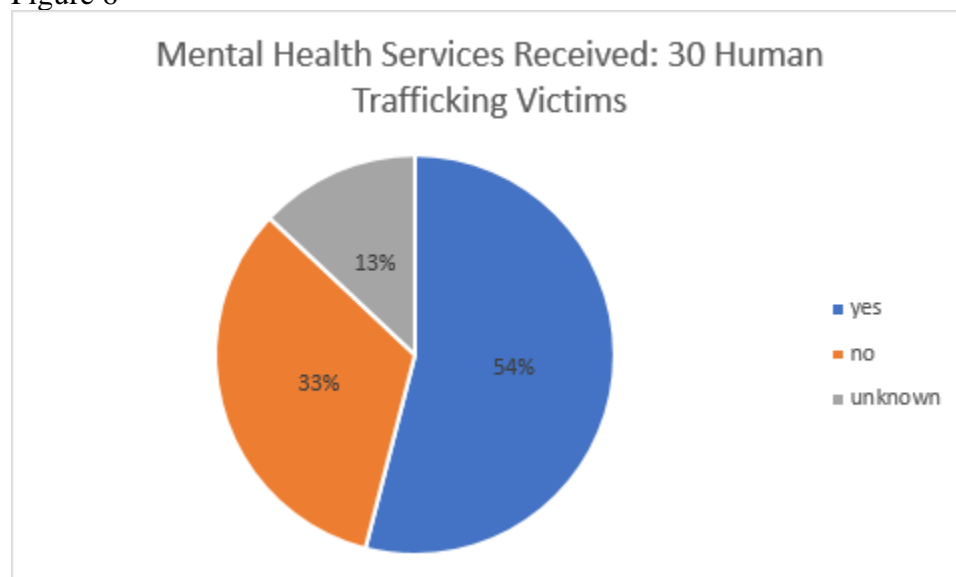


Figure 7

## Phase 2

Thematic analysis was conducted to determine the influence that human trafficking has on female participants in the CATCH Court per the staff. Also, the zoom virtual platform was

used to conduct the semi-structured interviews with the 5 CATCH Court staff who consented to be in the study. All five participants completed one semi-structured interview, and one face sheet. All participants were between the ages of 32-51 (Figure 8). All participants identified as female and were White and were ethnically of non-Hispanic origin (Figure 8). Participants reported that they all lived in the city of Columbus, Ohio (Figure 8). Regarding education, 80% of the participants earned a 4-year college degree or higher (Figure 8). For marital status, 40% of participants reported being single, 40% of participants were divorced, and 20% were married (Figure 8).

Face Sheet Questions	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3	No. 4	No. 5
D.O. B	7/29/1983	9/18/1987	3/13/1969	10/24/1984	9/19/1984
Age	36	32	51	34	35
Race	White	White	White	White	White
Ethnicity	Not of Hispanic Origin	Not of Hispanic Origin	Not of Hispanic Origin	Not of Hispanic Origin	Not of Hispanic Origin
Pregnant	X	X	X	X	X
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Occupation	CATCH Court Coordinator	CATCH Court Coordinator	Social Worker	Probation Officer	Bailiff
Current Residence	From City	From City	From City	From City	From City
Zip Code	43222	43214	43214	43214	43123
Marital Status	Married	Single	Divorced	Divorced	Single
Education Level	Graduated Graduate School	Some Graduate School	Graduated Graduate School	Some Graduate School	Some College

Figure 8. Participants Demographics

Four primary themes emerged: social bonds, dual/comorbid/co-occurring mental health disorders, barriers, and successes. Each theme was then placed under an individual, relational,

societal, and communal level category, or even more than one domain (Figure 9). The participant number is presented after the quote.

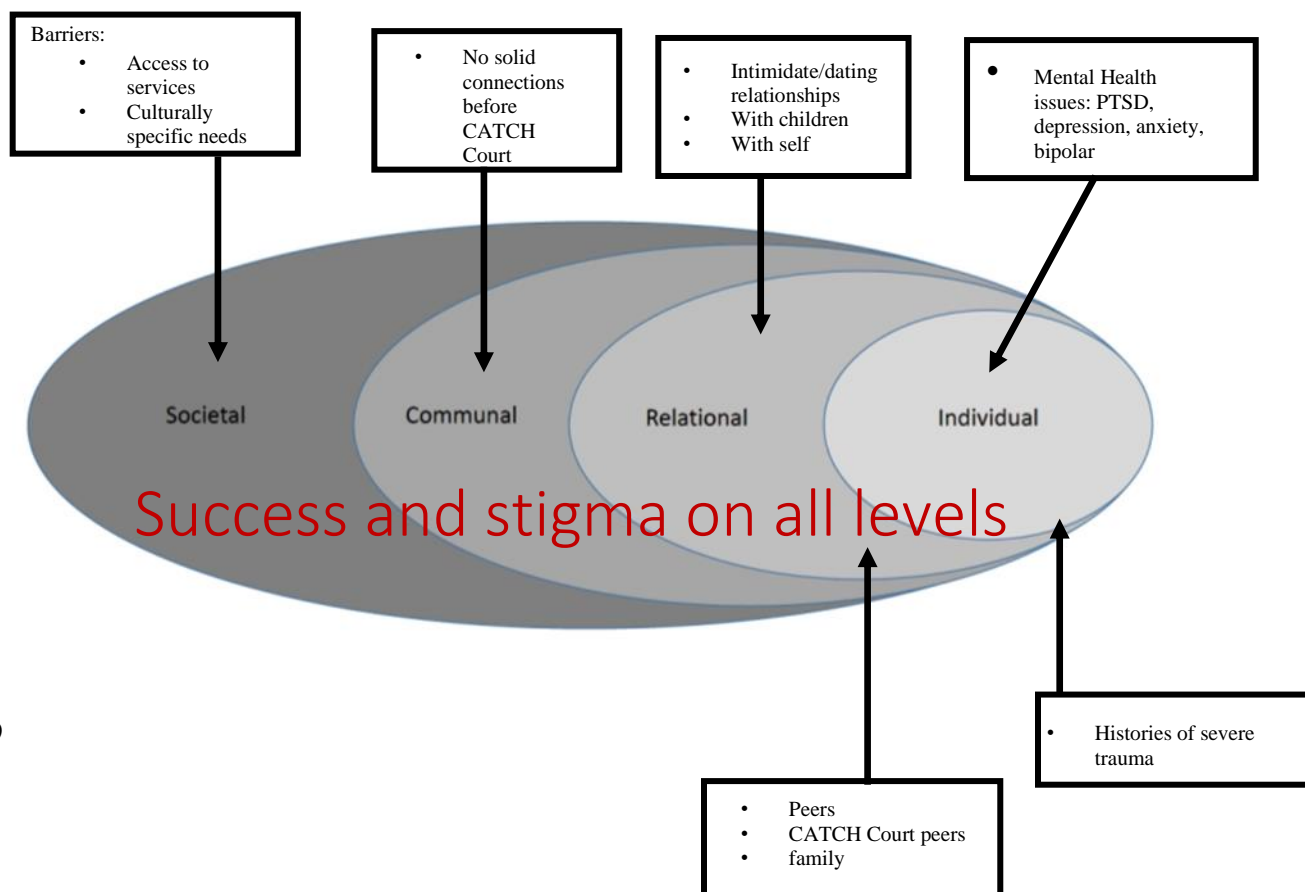


Figure 9

### ***Dual/Comorbid/Co-occurring Mental Health Disorders***

A significant theme at the individual level was dual/comorbid/co-occurring mental health disorders. Each participant identified PTSD, substance abuse, depression, anxiety, and bipolar as co-occurring disorders among CATCH participants. As one participant stated, *“I think that a lot of individuals who are trafficked come into those situations with very challenging mental health diagnoses that are, I would say, largely undiagnosed and mostly untreated. But I also think that*

*the trafficking scenarios themselves, obviously, create exacerbated mental health issues. So, I would say trafficking itself definitely creates PTSD, as we've seen, and pretty much every participant that we work with, if they didn't already have that... The things that they also come in with, are depression, anxiety, bipolar and then just their substance use disorders...but basically they have the substance use disorders and mixed with depression, anxiety, and then PTSD and that is that is the most common... dual diagnoses.” (2)*

### **Social Bonds**

Another significant theme was social bonds at the individual, relational, and communal levels. These results primarily focus on the individual level because all study participants endorsed the impact of the exploiter on women in CATCH. The study participants described the exploiter as having a significant impact on the overall well-being of the women. As one participant explained, *“What impact does exploiter have on the survivor/ catch court participant?” (3)* She also described the concept of trauma bonds that seems to be enhanced whenever the women encounter the exploiter:

*“Well, it's a huge impact. So, trauma bonding is what we usually are dealing with where the women who are exploited don't know There's often don't know they're being exploited. And so, whoever that person is, is usually who they have a very intense bond with, so it makes it very difficult for them to move forward.” (3)*

Participants described most of the women as having histories of childhood sexual abuse that continue into their adult lives. Another participant explained, *“So I would say a lot of them already come into those situations with PTSD from their childhood and, you know... all of the trauma that they've experienced.” (2)* Specifically, whenever they connected/reconnected with their exploiter(s) they were then groomed and/or misled into believing the (interactions) bonds

will be healthy, when in fact they were not. The CATCH Court program strives to create healthy bonds and relationships for the women, their peers, children, providers, CATCH staff, support networks, etc. Being in the program is often the first time the women have had the chance to build solid relationships and connections, that they need to leave CATCH Court to function and survive.

### ***Barriers***

Barriers for the CATCH Court population were affected on the societal level. Barriers for the participants include access to services and programs, like CATCH, and meeting culturally specific needs. Participants describe women accessing the CATCH program only by referral from their public defender or state's attorney, which the judge must approve. Otherwise, they cannot be assessed for the program. Unfortunately, in the CATCH program, most of their referrals are White women and few women of color and/or transgender women have participated in the program. One of the participants identified barriers that women face within the court and outside of the court, as well as their efforts to remove these barriers:

*“There seemed to be some barriers around referral that have nothing to do with the women. It has everything to do with certain judges, prosecutors attorneys not making the referrals and we don't know why. So that can be a barrier for women like what judged. Did they get and do they even get the opportunity to be referred to us... There are a lot of systemic injustices that these women have experienced, you know, whether it is poverty, homelessness... I mean we have trans women, you know, women of color, like women who have experienced just injustice upon injustice. But we are doing everything we can. And we're always looking for ways to improve how to remove some of those barriers.” (1)*

### ***Stigma***

Although not every staff person explicitly mentioned or discussed stigma, its impact on women was described across all levels of the socio-ecological framework. One participant expressed the stigma of having the history of a sex worker was evident across all levels.

*“One of the biggest barriers that these women have to deal with is the stigma that comes with being a prostitute. I think it is something that we do not acknowledge. I think it is something that brings an immense amount of guilt and shame to them when they are job seeking when they're dating when they are in the rooms, when they are in treatment with people that never were in the life, and I think that stigma makes it difficult for them to be transparent about their trauma and counseling. I think it makes it difficult for them to connect with individuals and meetings. I think it makes it difficult for them to find a healthy relationship. I think it impacts a bunch of areas of life that we do not acknowledge.” (4)*

At the individual level, participants described it as being salient in everything they do, including how they view themselves. Stigma is present in their relationships, including when working with treatment providers because they did not feel comfortable talking about their trauma due to feeling shame and guilt. At the communal and societal levels, stigma was evident throughout the entire process of accessing services. For example, a woman with a history of human trafficking may not want to notify her public defender, the state's attorney, or judge that she has a history of trauma and/or human trafficking due to the stigma that comes with once being a sex worker. Consequently, this limits her chances of being involved in the program.

### ***Successes***

Additionally, the theme of success was described by the participants. Not every participant gets through the program smoothly. The women in the CATCH Court program who stay in the program or come back to complete it, move on with their lives and develop effective

coping skills that allow them to be successful. Study participants stated that it was difficult to determine what success looks like overall. One participant shared a few different lenses of successes within this population:

*“A lot of different layers success looks like a lot of different things. Success for one woman is simply that she's not using anymore... owning your own business... some people's success is just putting on a job for more than 45 minutes... Their success isn't going out and fighting human trafficking...being able to say yes, to be able to put on my own clothes and to be able to set boundaries, like those are all different types of successes” (5)*

Other participants shared examples of success, including the women being able to function day to day with histories of severe trauma yet they did not revert to the streets and street life. Other examples were continuing to keep their criminal record clean, staying sober, as well as women who now have their own businesses or others who have maintained steady employment, regained custody of their children, and graduating from CATCH. Success looks different to everyone.

## **CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary of Findings**

This study’s exploration of the intersection of mental health, substance use, and ACEs among women who have histories of human trafficking illuminates several different ways these women are impacted at societal, communal, relational, and individual levels of their lives. The data presented validates that these women have experienced complex lives. Their high rates of traumatic experiences, violence, various forms of abuse, mental health symptoms, including PTSD and depression, as well as substance abuse indicate the urgent need for effective treatment, as a participant in the CATCH Court program. To inform the study design and results, the socio-



ecological level factors was assessed to understand the data, including the perspectives of court staff. The court staff expressed genuine concern for and care about the CATCH Court participants given the difficult circumstances most of them experienced. However, they also articulated hope in the context of their various levels of success once the women completed the program. Our findings also indicated that establishing trust and a meaningful relationship with the women was difficult based on their inability to trust others (outside the exploiter) and the level of stigma that influences how they are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves. This finding has been supported in previous research with female victims of human trafficking (Jacobson, 2014, p. 1028; Miner-Romanoff, 2017). Additionally, a key finding was the important role of barriers to some women's ability to access the CATCH Court program in this research. Per the court staff participants, only women who were referred to the program are eligible to participate, so mostly White women receive referrals. Furthermore, the court staff and the majority of the women participants in 2016 shared similar racial and ethnic backgrounds. Specifically, all the court staff identified and most of the women participants identified as White suggesting that few women of color participated in the program and no women of the color work in the program. Interestingly, the referral process was also noted as a potential barrier, especially for women of color.

### **Limitations**

Although this study has many strengths, some limitations must be considered in the interpretation of results. Though the data for Phase 1 of the study was secured and used for this thesis research project it was not collected for research but for programmatic (assessment) purposes. Therefore, methodological limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. Also, this is not a traditional mixed methods study even though the study includes both a

quantitative and a qualitative component. Future work should include a basic or advanced mixed methods design (Creswell, 2014, pp. 34 & 42). For example, a future study could include an exploratory sequential mixed methods design that starts with a quantitative phase to assess the views of providers, including CATCH Court staff to identify ways to better serve the population. Phase 2 of the study could be designed based on the feedback from the participants in Phase 1 (Creswell, 2014, pp. 39).

Another methodological limitation includes the sample size of women participants in Phase 1 ( $n = 61$ ), which was small and reduced the power of the sample to detect differences or assess an association of the mental health factors. Also, this could have been due to only using data from one-time period that was collected and available for analysis, as well as possible data entry issues. Consequently, the low number of women in Phase 1 may not provide an accurate reflection of female victims of human trafficking, as well as CATCH Court participants in Central Ohio, so it was a limitation in the study. Also, for Phase 2 of the study, the interviews were supposed to be conducted in the court setting; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic this was not able to be carried out. Following institutional approval for the study change, the interviews with CATCH court staff were conducted via the zoom platform, so the virtual format could have impacted the interaction during the interviews. One participant noted that they wished they had been able to meet in person instead of virtually.

Another limitation worth noting is that the study population only included CATCH Court program participants and staff. Consequently, the study population may not represent other women with experiences in human trafficking who did not participate in the CATCH Court program. Further, the qualitative study findings are limited to the CATCH Court staff. Even though they provided their perspectives (primary data) that is rich and contextual, their

perspectives are not necessarily generalizable to other staff that work in diversion (problem-solving) courts. The study findings do not represent the views of the women participants of the CATCH Court program. Further, the CATCH Court program participants included few if any women of color or transgender women as the majority of the CATCH Court participants were middle-aged White women. Therefore, generalizability may be a limitation in this study. As with other local study samples, generalizability is limited because the data for the study was restricted to a particular time period. Also, since the study sample is limited to one court in Franklin County, Ohio, it may not represent female victims of human trafficking outside of this locale. Therefore, findings need to be generalized with caution.

This is a cross-sectional study, so there is no way to determine changes in the women's mental health factors over time. The need to explore these factors longitudinally and explore, identify and/or confirm women's pathways out of human trafficking are topics to consider for future research studies. In addition, the court staff were only interviewed once, so it is possible that their views could have changed over time.

Further, this study relied exclusively on self-report measures; future research should include other sources of data, such as interviews with women participants of CATCH Court, as well as women who have not participated in the program given the issues with access. It may be useful to recruit and/or oversample women of color who are less likely to be referred to the program to assess their awareness of these services. Finally, the Co-Investigator conducted the interviews, and this could have introduced interviewer bias.

Despite these limitations, this study is an exploratory first step in understanding the population of CATCH Court participants, including the views of court staff. The findings from this study offer practical significance and important implications for social work and criminal

justice practice, research and policy that will benefit the women and the individuals that work with them.

## **Implications of this Study**

### ***Practice***

The provision of evidence-based mental health treatment for women in court diversion programs with histories of trauma, mental health and substance abuse diagnoses is critical to their success in these programs. Consequently, court staff and service providers need training to ensure the women can complete the court program and rebuild their lives. Although the CATCH Court provides the participants with some training, more training would be useful for the population. Currently, they complete training courses in domestic skills like cooking and cleaning. Also, once they complete and/or graduate from the program they must move on and re-enter their communities. However, many of the participants may have struggled to survive in low wage positions like cooking and cleaning. Therefore, it would be beneficial to provide more training in finance, technology, as well as participate in professional development services like leadership training, resume writing and mock interviews to better prepare them for life once they leave the program. In addition, having the opportunity to earn their GED would help them in their job search efforts, as well as finding a career. Court diversion programs who employ staff with diverse skills who also collaborate with other service providers who have comprehensive skills is necessary to ensure their long-term success, health and well-being.

Currently, women are only eligible for the CATCH Court program if they are referred by either their public defender or states attorney and approved by the judge. Also, CATCH Court staff are not able to contact potential participants directly to recruit them to the program; they only have contact with them after they have been referred to the program. To date, few women

of color and transgender women are referred to the CATCH Court program who also need services to address their issues. Limiting the number of participants in the program due to court personnel's lack of knowledge about women with diverse backgrounds who also have histories of human trafficking is an issue that needs to be addressed. The court staff participants in this study noted awareness of this issue and a desire to address it. The promotion and expansion for CATCH Court services is crucial to improve the lives of the human trafficking population.

Court staff who work directly with female victims of human trafficking are essential team members in collaborative efforts to promote the well-being of this population who are in dire need. Although most court participants stated the women have significant challenges to overcome, most felt the women went on to lead lives with some measure of success even if they did not complete the program. This suggests that many of the participants held views that were influenced by a strength's perspective, so they were able to identify success across all the levels of the socio-ecological framework. Specifically, a strength-based approach considers everyone based on their "capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, vision, values and hopes" (Sallebey, 1996, p. 297). This may also address the concern that participants described about the women they worked with faced regarding stigma associated with their histories of sex work. Having staff who will make the effort to consider the women in the CATCH Court program as whole human beings means that all their attributes: age, culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. are viewed as strengths (Heffernan & Blythe, 2014). These perspectives are necessary for social workers and court personnel who work with women survivors, so they are better able to understand and address their behavior.

### ***Policy***

The dramatic shifts in public policy and law modifications have had an impact on women, including those with histories of sex work. Also, the changes in laws and policies gravely impact women involved in human trafficking causing significant considerations for how social workers engage them. In particular, social workers need to understand how these policies and laws are applied and often result in women escaping the criminal justice system. The knowledge from this study aids in social worker's ability to advocate for them and their children who are often not in their custody. Also, it provides a platform for large scale advocacy with legislators who can appropriate funds to expand court diversion program like the CATCH Court program, and improve services for the participants, especially women of color and those who identify as transgender.

Implications for policy also include identifying and reducing systemic barriers within the referral process, as well as increasing the federal, state and local safety net to reduce homelessness, unemployment, and poverty. Once the survivors graduate from the program they remain at a high-risk of homelessness, unemployment, and poverty. To increase their chances of starting a new life it would be beneficial if they were provided with supports to bolster their success. The female victims of human trafficking that interact with the Franklin County Municipal Court must be referred by a public defender or states attorney and approved by the judge to be assessed for the program. It is a systemic barrier for not only the victims, but the CATCH Court staff. They may know of a victim who would benefit from the program, but they are not able to refer them or speak to them about the program until they have been enrolled.

***Research: implications consequences physical, psychological, and social***

Results from this study reflect the need to expand the referral pool of eligible participants for CATCH Court given the presence of health and psychological disorders that they have.

Though limited, there is established evidence about the health consequences faced by human trafficking victims, but one review included 19 studies to identify their health outcomes. The research sample were women and girls from India and Nepal and was conducted with funding from an Economic and Social Research Council studentship (Oram, Stöckl, Busza, et.al, 2012). The study focused on women and girls and suggested that women experienced high levels of physical and sexual violence. Common symptoms included headaches, stomach and back pain, and memory problems. Screening tools that were used to identify psychological problems suggested they had high levels of anxiety (50%-90%), depression (55%-100%), and post-traumatic stress disorder (20%-75%) (Oram, Stöckl, Busza, et.al, 2012). The study suggests that the longer the duration of being involved in human trafficking the higher the risks and pain. Lastly, they also reported high numbers of victims diagnosed with HIV. Nearly 30% of victim's interviewed were infected with HIV (Oram, Stöckl, Busza, et.al, 2012). These findings are just a few of the health problems victims of human trafficking become exposed to and future research should focus on larger populations of women.

There is a need for more specificity in research on human trafficking with a larger sample of women participants in CATCH Court. First, there is a need for time-series research designs that identify causal links. Cross-sectional research designs do not provide opportunities to investigate causal relationships. For example, the current thesis identified high prevalence rates of depression, trauma, PTSD and opioid disorders; however, the cross-sectional design and small sample size did not allow the Co-Investigator to establish whether these relationships were causal or confounding. Future research should re-examine these relationships for women to determine patterns by race and age in multivariate models.

Second, future research on protective factors should also include a focus on self-efficacy, especially since the court participants had such different views of success. Past research has noted that CATCH Court participants were involved in human trafficking as young girls and continued to do so even though it was not their choice (Begun & Hammond, 2012). Many of these women experienced stigma associated with sex work even though they were lured into sex work so future research should explore their self-efficacy to determine ways to build upon their strengths, especially in the court and treatment settings. In addition, the CATCH program incorporates skills and employment training, which is critical for these women to rebuild their lives. Attaining successful employment has been noted as one of the “turning points” that could increase a person’s desistance from crime over the course of their lives (Rutter, 1987). Employment is an important factor to examine as many women were described as having no education, or employment history. Being able to ensure that their time is being spent working is necessary for their future livelihood and well-being.

Lastly, the extensive approval process to secure the data for this thesis study indicates the benefit of having such a strong relationship with the CATCH Court Program. The relationship between the CATCH Court and The Ohio State University College of Social Work was instrumental in making this thesis study a reality. Building further on these types of collaborations is critical for faculty and students interested in conducting research with this population.

## **Recommendations**

Social workers and the social work profession need to remain involved with the criminal justice system, including diversion (problem-solving) courts. Social workers were in the forefront of creating the juvenile court, which is noteworthy since many women have



experienced trauma and abuse that may lead them to lifelong crime, including sex work and/or human trafficking. Previous shifts to more punitive approaches suggest the need for social workers to take a more proactive role in shaping the discourse that promotes a needed change in policy development and implementation. This becomes a critical move as more and more women are targeted for arrest due to their involvement with human trafficking, especially minority women who are overrepresented in the criminal justice system (Richie, 1996). As noted from this study, these women have extensive histories of abuse, victimization, and family dysfunction, which likely led to them being targeted by exploiters. Consequently, they need comprehensive services to reduce their difficulties and enhance their strengths. Policymakers have the power to fund these initiatives, but social workers need to advocate on behalf of women survivors and shape a different narrative about them and their lives. To make this a reality, prosecutors, public offenders, and judges need to be educated with information about human trafficking, as well as the intersections of race, gender, and crime. They also need to understand how programs like CATCH Court need to be expanded to populations who have traditionally not been engaged.

## **Conclusion**

The need for social work services for adult offenders is needed (Brownell, & Roberts, 2002). Research that highlights the needs of women involved with the criminal justice system, especially those who are victims of human trafficking is critical to effective social work practice with them as it provides insight to better understand their needs, which could greatly influence existing policies that govern the criminal justice system, especially the court. This thesis study attempted to reveal the prevalence of mental health factors in a local sample of participants in CATCH Court, including the perspectives of court staff who work with them. The findings show that women face numerous and complex challenges that cannot be addressed in the short-term.

Consequently, social workers need to understand this but also recognize the women's potential to change their lives for the better in the face of their adversity. Moreover, focusing on perspectives of court staff was prudent because it highlighted themes of success, as well as barriers that are critical to assisting them in treatment and beyond. Further, the expansion of treatment and support for the CATCH Court population is necessary, but it needs to be expanded to ensure access for women with diverse backgrounds. Even though stigma affects the women on all levels, it can be countered with comprehensive education, i.e., public educational campaigns to dispel these stigmatizing ideas.

The findings from this study provide researchers and social workers with valuable information for the treatment and continued research about female victims of human trafficking. This information informs professional social workers and other court personnel who are needed for counseling, advocacy, and linking women to substance abuse, health and mental health systems during and after their enrollment in CATCH Court. Also, the findings from this study address these deficits in knowledge and provide useful insight for scholars and practitioners in this field. With more insight, clinicians can work with women to help them mitigate the effects of their trauma histories, and the social bonds with their past and future exploiters and boost the positive effects of protective factors in their lives.

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